

FEB 25 1925 /

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THE BURNING TRAIL

Photoplay in five reels
✓ Henry Herbert Knibbs' novel
✓ From ~~the story~~ Sundown Slim ✓

~~by H. H. Knibbs~~

Directed by Arthur Rosson

Author of the photoplay (under section 62)
Universal Pictures Corporation of U.S.

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FEB 25 1925

"THE BURNING TRAIL"
Western Feature Starring
WILLIAM DESMOND

* * *

"Smiling Bill" Flannagan swears off the prize ring when an opponent dies after being knocked out. He wanders west to forget that he is the cause, even though innocently so, of another man's death.

Obtaining a job as cook at a big ranch, he has several verbal difficulties with "Texas", a supposedly bad man. Texas shoots a hole in the coffee pot and Bill flips a hot pancake over his shoulder striking Texas in the face. The boss intercedes and fires them both.

Texas gets a job with the Corliss cattle outfit and offers to show Tommy, the younger brother, how to take his cattle across a sheepman's territory, to save an 80 mile stretch to market. Bill wanders out into the desert, care-free and indifferent to life.

The elder Corliss brother, John, loves the sheepman's daughter. He refuses to sanction his brother's action. Texas and the younger brother are driven back and on the way they meet Bill, who asks them for a job. He is told to wander over a few hills farther.

Chance causes Bill to save Corliss' cousin from Texas and he gets a job on the Corliss ranch. Circumstances then force him to leave. He gets a job on the sheepman's grange and the cattlemen sweep down. A fire results, and Bill saves the sheepman's daughter and Corliss' cousin- and it all leads to a happy ending.

* * * * *

DEC -5 1925

Washington, D. C.

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The Blood Bond

By
C. GARDNER SULLIVAN

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no 2

The BLOOD BOND

BY

C. GARDNER SULLIVAN

THE PROLOGUE

A Sunday morning prior to America's entrance in the Great War—morning services at St. John's with the young rector, Peter Stanton delivering his customary well worded but colorless sermon—he is the youngest rector the church has ever had and has succeeded his father in the pulpit of St. John's, this being possible through the sentiment attached to the thought of the son following in his father's footsteps and also owing to the influence of Nathaniel Brown, the biggest man in Alden and chief pillar of the church. Young Peter's actions show he is class conscious and hide-bound by traditions.

Peter's mother and sister listened to him proudly. Old Nathaniel Brown is also a pleased listener, and his daughter Shirley is very proud of Peter. They have been boy and girl sweethearts since they were children and although they are not engaged, Old Nathaniel and Peter's mother look on the marriage as a certainty. Shirley loves Peter and he returns her love.

While the sermon drags on the scene shifts to the home of Dick Shores, employed as a mechanic in Nathaniel Brown's woolen mill. Dick is working in the garden, while his sister Elsie and his mother look on contentedly.

Again the scene shifts to the saloon of Tug Wilson, who is taking a chance in defying the law and

keeping his saloon open on Sunday. His only customer at the moment is Jake Jones, a truck driver. On a nearby corner stands Michael Tierney, member of Alden's small police force. Mike has no sympathy for the Sunday closing law, but he is afraid of the wrath of the high-brows and as a matter of self protection intends to see that the law is obeyed. He descends upon Tug and Jake and informs them they are both pinched. As he is leading them to the "wagon" Peter Stanton, his mother and aunt, Old Nathaniel and Shirley pass in the Brown car on their way to Nathaniel's summer home for Sunday dinner. Peter, as a militant young minister, gets out and inquires the trouble from Mike, giving him a word of praise for his vigilance. Mike has no time for Peter, whom he classes as a blue-stocking, and Jake and Tug return Peter's gaze with a look of sardonic contempt. This closes the first sequence of the prologue.

We now see a different Alden. America has gone into the Big War and E Company of the Second Massachusetts National Guard, is marching away to entrain for New York. In the leading squad, of which Mike Tierney is a Corporal, march Tug Wilson and Jake Jones. From his porch, Peter, the light of battle in his eyes, watches them. Further down the street Elsie Shores and her mother fight back the tears and cheer shrilly as Dick, a sergeant, swings by with E Company. This is the second sequence of the prologue.

We next see a front-line trench in Northwestern France during a lull in hostilities. In the mud and water Corporal Mike Tierney and his two faithful pals, Tug Wilson and Jake Jones are trying to scrape up enough tobacco to make three cigarettes.

In a base hospital back of the lines, lies Sergeant Dick Shores, a gas victim. Peter, otherwise known as "Praying Pete" joins the three friends and produces a sack of Bull Durham. The smoke of the four cigarettes fuses above the heads of the smokers and it is allegorical of what the War has done. Peter is not only shepherd of his flock but he is the pal of every man in the company.

THE STORY

It is October of the year 1919, nearly a year since the signing of the Armistice and we are again back in Alden, Massachusetts. The boys who have been spared by German gun-fire and gas have been back nearly a month now. The returning heroes have laid aside their uniforms and are looking for jobs. They are a bit frightened by the drastic changes made during their absence—prohibition, the influx of girl labor and the high cost of living. The only thing between Alden and a long, wearisome winter is the municipal election in November. The Conservative element, headed by Nathaniel Brown, and which has been in power for the last thirty years, has named Grant Hillburne as its candidate for mayor. Hillburne is a lawyer with social aspirations and is regarded as "safe." Secretly he is Old Nathaniel's Good Man Friday. Included among his ambitions is the winning of Shirley Brown for his wife. The Opposition, which includes the "sporty" element, will name a candidate if they can find a man who is willing to be badly beaten. The ward below the railroad track will re-elect Pat Hogan as alderman but outside of that the Liberal ticket will be noticeable for its absence.

The four men in whom we are most interested have settled back into more or less the old routine. Peter has resumed his duties as rector of St. John's. The change in him is greatly noticeable. He wears a short aggressive moustache. The dreamer, the class-conscious man has vanished and in his place is the new man, alert, keen to the brother-call of humanity.

Michael Tierney has returned to his duties as a member of Alden's police force. Jake Jones has gone back to his truck and Tug Wilson, who has left an arm over-seas, has secured himself a job at the soda fountain in the drug store.

Dick Shores is one of the pitiful victims of the war, practically an invalid and unable to work. His mother has died during his absence and his sister Elsie is now the bread-winner, employed in Brown's mill.

In his study Praying Peter and his pals, The Three Musketeers, are going over the old days, singing trench songs so loudly they do not hear the ringing of the door bell. A committee from the parishioners of St. John's headed by Grant Hillburne and Shirley Brown have called upon their rector with a great idea; to start a subscription for a monument to Alden's boys who fought in the Great War. Mrs. Stanton and Aunt Abigail are greatly embarrassed as the roar of the quartette singing their trench songs reaches the ears of the committee. Peter is summoned. He excuses himself to his friends after exacting a promise from each that he will attend the Sunday morning services. Then the committee unfolds to Peter their plan for a monument. They are all enthusiastic. It has been done after every war. Peter doesn't seem quite so en-

thusiastic, however. "Why I guess it's all right," he finally says, "unless the money could be put to better use." Hillburne is hurt and Shirley vaguely fights a feeling of disappointment.

The Sunday morning services at St. John's are just starting. Dick and Elsie Shores are there. Mike Tierney, followed by Jake Jones and Tug Wilson edges painfully through the door. Tug has taken a chance and invited Millie Turner, a pretty telephone operator with whom he is greatly in love. Peter sees them enter and smiles boyishly.

The services over, Peter hastens to greet his friends, but he realizes their attendance has not been a success. The Three Musketeers realize, from the attitude of the congregation, that they don't belong. Dick and Elsie also feel they are not particularly welcome and a sense of rebellion rises in the girl. Peter has told them: "My people are your people," but she knows this is not so and never will be.

There is a noticeable air of constraint at the time-honored Sunday dinner at Old Nathaniel's home that day, and a bitter discussion between Peter and Old Nathaniel. Peter tells the old man he thinks the town needs another mill as a lot of the boys who have come back are more or less lost and work is hard to get. He advocates the building of a mill instead of a monument and explains his plan of making the townspeople independent by letting them subscribe to stock in same. To Old Nathaniel this talk of another mill to run in opposition to his own is nothing short of sacrilege, and he tells Peter to get that fool idea and a lot of other fool ideas out of his head.

A public meeting has been called by the Conservative party as the opening gun of the mayoralty cam-

paign despite the fact that the Opposition has not yet named its candidate. The meeting is for the purpose of introducing Grant Hillburne and the returned soldiers have been especially invited to attend and hear what Nathaniel's party intends to do for them. They come in a body, and noticeable among them is Peter Stanton and his pals. The more Peter thinks of Old Nathaniel's stand against the new mill the more is he convinced that it is prompted solely by selfishness. He feels the time has come to cut sharply away from hide-bound traditions.

Hillburne is introduced. There is mild applause. His speech consists of generalities, time-worn platitudes and vague promises of a golden future in which every vital issue is avoided. The soldiers shift uneasily. This isn't exactly what they expected to hear.

The chairman now smilingly introduces Peter—"A shining example of Alden's sterling manhood, one of the boys who fought to make the world safe for Freedom." A wild outburst of applause greets Peter. Then comes a bomb shell for Peter departs from the travel worn ways of his ancestors. He talks simply and to the point, and now publicly voices his project of a new mill to be owned by the citizens of Alden, a mill that will give every man work. "Let this be the monument Alden builds to its soldiers," he concludes. A wave of wild enthusiasm deluges the hall. Not only the returned soldiers but the townspeople are caught by the idea. They cheer Peter until they are hoarse and the meeting ends in confusion. Old Nathaniel says nothing, but his jaws set like a trap as he makes his way to Peter's home. There his pent-up anger flares out wildly. Peter's anger, long held back, surges over

his self control and he tells Old Nathaniel that if his way of thinking is offensive to St. John's he will resign. Old Nathaniel is not a man to take a bluff and Peter's resignation is accepted.

The news that Peter has resigned the pastorate of St. John's gives Alden the greatest thrill since the declaration of war. "He ought to be our mayor," Pat Collins, leader of the Opposition declares. "Stanton for mayor and a municipal mill. That's what we want to vote for!" The late afternoon edition of the Opposition newspaper carries the story that Peter Stanton, the fighting minister, will head its ticket for a bigger and better Alden.

Old Nathaniel's party is getting worried and decides something must be done. A story is being circulated that the old Eagle House is selling booze; it is denounced as a trap for young men and girls and it is hinted that returned soldiers have taken to visiting the place. The Opposition openly charges lax police rule under the present administration and Old Nathaniel orders the place raided that night.

Elsie Shores is having a hard time earning a living for herself and her invalid brother Dick. Since her visit to St. John's she has become bitter and rebellious, and because of this feeling listens to Gertie Shaw when the latter tells her she can have a good time and add considerably to her income by visiting the old Eagle House.

That night, after attending a meeting in the mill district, Peter pays a visit to Dick Shores. As he leaves the house he sees Elsie with Gertie Shaw and a man known as "Curly" Evans, a tin horn sport whom Peter knows by sight. Peter is worried as he sees Elsie leave with Evans going in the direction of the Eagle House. He follows them. Into one of

the "private" rooms on the ground floor Evans leads Elsie and tells her to wait there while he rustles up something to drink. As Evans steps into the passageway he sees Peter coming toward him. Peter orders him to "beat it" and Curley swings on him. Peter's right, traveling like a thunderbolt, catches Curley on the point of his jaw and he goes down and out. Peter then enters the private room and has barely time to help Elsie out through the window before the police enter.

The door flies open and the police tumble in, headed by Mike Tierney, who stares open-mouthed at Peter. Peter asks to be left alone with Mike, saying he will explain to him. Peter tells Mike he doesn't want him to know who the girl was, that she got in there by mistake. The door opens and the reporter from the Conservative paper enters. He is sarcastic and insinuating when Peter refuses to make an explanation.

The morning brings a bomb-shell to Alden. The Conservative paper carries under flaming headlines the story of the raid and of Peter Stanton's "capture" in the Eagle House. In the camp of the Liberals there is consternation and despair. Peter is summoned but refuses to talk, but he is undergoing torture as he knows what a scandal like this means on the day before election. And his fears are realized. Popular favor is a fickle thing at best. Hillburne is elected by an overwhelming majority.

When Elsie reads the returns she becomes hysterical and sobs out the truth to her brother. There is but one thing to do; shoot square; prove to Peter Stanton that his sacrifice was not in vain, and Dick hurries Elsie to the headquarters of the defeated party.

There is deep silence in Pat Collins' office following Elsie's story, then Pat sends for the editor of his paper, saying he will give Alden something to read about. And he keeps his word, for the story of Peter Stanton's sacrifice is all over the first page of the Liberal newspaper next morning.

In the Brown home there is much agitation visible to the naked eye. Old Nathaniel is reading the Opposition paper which Shirley has just handed him. The girl's eyes are filled with tears. Old Nathaniel reads on in uneasy silence. Peter's sacrifice arouses his deep admiration. He keeps Hillburne cooling his heels in the living room while he and Shirley set out for the Stanton home.

Peter pauses in embarrassment when he sees Old Nathaniel and Shirley, but Old Nathaniel loses no time. He tells Peter he is proud of him, for him not to worry about the mill that he will build it and let the townspeople subscribe to stock in it. He also tells Peter that he can have any job he wants in the administration, but adds that he thinks St. John's needs him most. The two men shake hands in true understanding, and Old Nathaniel shoves Shirley toward Peter saying she wants to see Peter—alone.

There is a reconciliation between the boy and girl and Shirley is telling Peter how proud she is of him when the door flies open and the Three Musketeers enter. They surround Peter and Shirley and Peter beams on the "gang," telling them it is the happiest day of his life. "Sure," says Tug Wilson, "I've been there myself. And say, Pete, Millie and me has decided to name the first one after you."

Mike Tierney's spirits can no longer be held within bonds and he hurls his hat against the ceiling.

"What's the matter with Praying Pete?" he yells.

"He's all right," comes the ringing assurance.

Shirley's voice carries on.

"Who's all right?" she cries sweetly.

"Praying Pete," is the booming answer.

In the living room Old Nathaniel, Mrs. Stanton and Aunt Abigail listen smilingly.

"It's great to be young," observes Old Nathaniel.

THAT'S ALL.

SECOND ENDING

Jobs are scarce in Alden, especially scarce for any enemy of Nathaniel Brown, and there is nothing for Peter Stanton to do after his defeat but take a job driving a truck. Shirley wept with rage when she heard of it, and stopped speaking to him. One rainy day her car stalls, and Peter swings her up to the driver's seat on his truck and drives her home. When he puts her down he tells her he will never speak to her again, never ask her to marry him until she begs him to swing her up beside him on that truck.

The statue which Nathaniel Brown determined to have erected to the men who went over seas becomes a fact. Nathaniel Brown ordered it carved and gives it as a gift to the town immediately after the election. It is a strategic thing for him to do, for it serves three purposes. It helps allay any feelings that followed the election; it heals Nathaniel Brown's vanity, and it is a sop to the conscience that troubles him when he thinks of Stanton's sad face and of the suffering in his daughter's white face. Shirley Brown uses rouge these days, but when did rouge hide a heart ache?

The statue is a thing of marvelous beauty. It is

a group composed of a jackie, a marine and a doughboy, and back of them, higher than the rest, is a young aviator from whose shoulders, like great wings, rise the wings of a battle plane. The doughboy's hand is on a machine gun, and on their faces is the exaltation of a strong young race come to do battle against ancient wrong. On the base of that statute are carved Pershing's ringing words at La Fayette's tomb—We Are Here.

When the statue is dedicated, Alden has a great celebration. From every county in the state they come, doughboy, marine and jackie, to the unveiling of that statue, shabby, not too well-fed, with bitterness in their hearts, for, literally, they have asked for bread and been given stone by a man the safety of whom, and the safety of whose son, has been bought by the torn and riddled bodies of their comrades.

Dick Shores does not go. Dick was an aviator in the war. He sits in his wheel chair on the porch, his head buried in his hands, and sobs because he will never fly again.

Nathaniel Brown owns the saw mills and shingle mills in Alden. He also owns the company's stores and the banks. The townspeople must buy at his stores, borrow money in his banks, and take his wages. His real grip on the town was accounted for by the fact that he had years before forced from the city council a long term franchise, giving him control of the water rights and power rights that belonged to the city.

He also has great timber holdings. Acres and acres of uncut timber, in the heart of which is the most magnificent and valuable stand of white spruce in the whole Northwest are his. Nathaniel Brown

did not cut and send to France that magnificent stand of white spruce to be used for the wings of the battle planes, for he knew he could get more money for it after the war than the government would pay. His other spruce was not so good a quality, but that he cut and sent. He felt no responsibility if planes buckled and fell, and young lives were dashed out because their battle plane wings were made of inferior spruce. His boy was safe. Nathaniel had used his influence to have him exempted from the draft because of his knowledge of the lumber business.

The white spruce that didn't go to France had been cut that winter, and great logs of it lie in booms up the river, with countless others of pine and redwood. The river is running high after the winter's rains, and the day after the celebration Nathaniel Brown expects to begin his spring drive.

The loggers are in town for the celebration, and before dawn that morning one of the booms breaks through into the river. Finally those countless "maverick" logs all catch in a great jam just where a small stream pours into the river. They dam the river at that point, forcing the water back into this stream. It backs up as far as it can go, and then pours in a solid wall of water down into Nathaniel Brown's dam. The dam's walls are none too strong, and the pressure reaches the danger point. In this way the white spruce avenges itself by setting free all that unused power to destroy Nathaniel Brown and the town of Alden.

Late that afternoon when a ranger telephones the town, everyone knows just one thing can save them; men, trained men—a great host of them that can go into action at once.

Peter Stanton takes command. He sends Michael Tierney to mobilize the town's motorcycles and send them out over the roads the returning soldiers are taking. South, East, North and West he sends the recall, and back they come—by truck, by motorcycle and by train they pour into Alden. Under Stanton's guidance, part of them drive the people from their homes to the hills around the town. Part of them, those who know trench warfare, are put to work strengthening the walls of the dam. Led by Stanton, who has worked in logging camps, those who know the river go up to break up the log jam.

As Stanton loads a small car with dynamite, a great high-powered motor sweeps up beside him. In it are Shirley Brown and her brother. Stephen Brown is not all yellow. He knows the river, and knows his place is there. Shirley orders Stephen to get in, saying she knows the road and her car can outstrip the other. Stephen obeys her, and on the way up the river road, Shirley tells Peter of her love for him.

A thick stream of water races down from a break in the dam and flows through the town's main street. It ruins a few stores, and, strangely enough, edges around and eats out the soft soil under the new statue so that it falls crashing on its side to the ground.

Dynamite and young muscle do the work. Suddenly the jam breaks, the logs leap high in the air, and, riding the logs of the white spruce that did not go to France, with the three musketeers on a raft of logs behind him, Peter Stanton rides down the river, and as they ride they sing their old trench song.

It is a triumphal progress, for the moment the

log jam breaks, the river begins to clear, the water in the little stream recedes, and the sheet of water no longer flows into the dam, and the water in the dam sinks below the danger mark. The boys are given an ovation by the townspeople of Alden, who return to their homes, a warm glow in their hearts.

Stephen Brown is fatally hurt by a log of white spruce. He knows he is dying, and sends for his father, to whom he tells the truth about himself and Elsie Shores—that it had been he and not Stanton who had taken her to the roadhouse that night. He makes his father promise to clear Stanton; makes him promise also that Dick Shores shall have the operation that will make him whole again.

Across the bed of his dead son Nathaniel Brown faces the truth about himself and life. He keeps his promises to his son. Dick Shores is operated on and grows well enough to fly again. Peter Stanton is reinstated as rector of St. John's. New mills and factories are built that employ thousands. The control of its water and power rights go back to the city. Shirley and Peter are reunited.

The statue, unharmed except that one of the young aviator's wings was broken, is replaced, but the aviator's wing is never mended. Nathaniel Brown wished it to remain as it was, and all Alden respected him for it. To them and to him that broken wing was a mute rebuke. Morning and evening the workers of Alden pour past the city square where, high above them, that statue towers, those exalted young faces turned toward the morning. Each day the first rays of the morning sun touch those faces with dawn's ancient promise of a new day, and turn to gold those words of strength and comfort—WE ARE HERE.

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